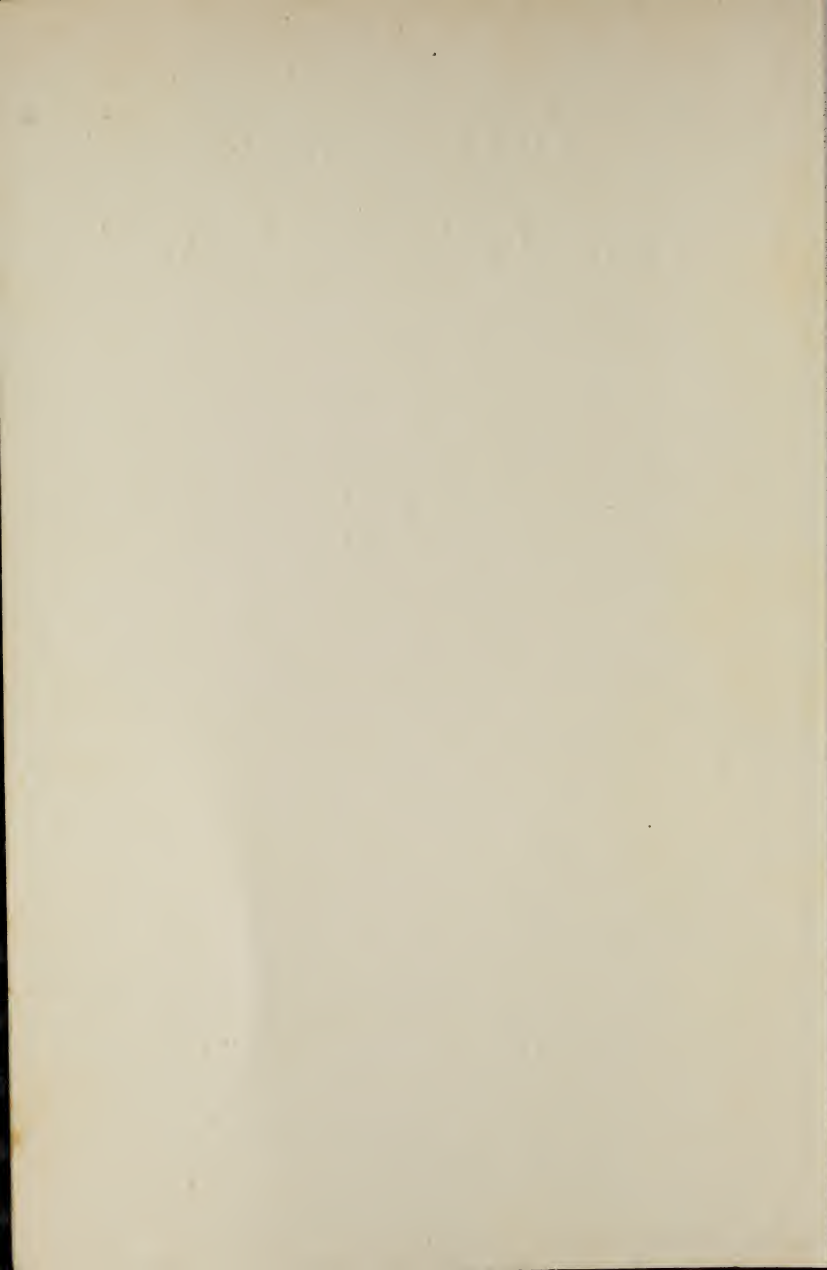


THE COLONIZATION
OF THE GRENZMARK



GRENZMARK GUIDES



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Editors • Erich Weise • Hans Jakob Schmitz

The Colonization
of the
Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia

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General

The colonization of the Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia does not show a uniform development, a fact also evident in the racial composition of the population. The reason for this is due to exceptional characteristics of, and the totally different historical developments in, the individual parts of this province, which also account for its double name. As a province, the Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia is the bearer of tradition, and its creation the result of the Treaty of Versailles and the necessary "Reorganization of the Communal Constitution and Administration of the Ostmark", caused by said treaty, and carried through according to the Law of July 21, 1922. The province embraces the scanty remnants of the former Province of Posen, and that certain strip of territory of the former Province of West Prussia which is situated on the German side of the border of the Polish Corridor leading to the Baltic. At a length of 430 kilometers it borders on Poland, bending in a sickle-shaped manner around the western salient of that country, and, compared with its northern extension, is only of small width in an easterly direction. At certain places, this

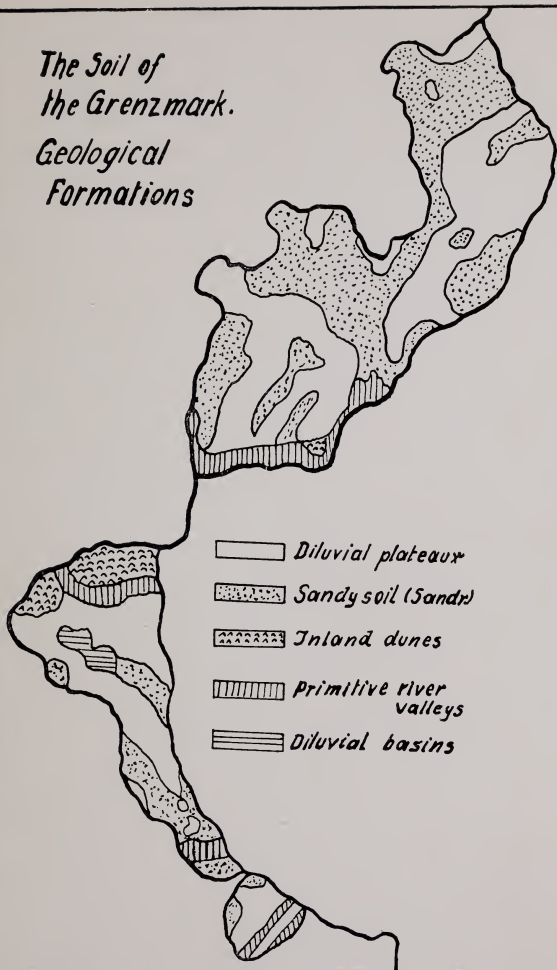
strip of territory is only from 10 to 15 kilometers wide, and totally intercepted at two places, thus dividing the province into three separate component parts of which the northern one is the largest, and the southern one, the County of Fraustadt, the smallest. Just as little as the province is an undivided geographical entity, but, and due to its elongated shape, projects through several districts possessed of typical, natural landscapes, does its population show a uniform national character; on the contrary, each of the three component parts has a population differing from the others according to its geographical location and historical development.

The Grenzmark is the smallest of the Prussian provinces, and embraces eight counties and the City and County of Schneidemühl.

The fact that the density of population averages 113.4 inhabitants per square mile, the country, therefore, being only sparsely populated, is due to the small productiveness of its soil. The majority of the population derives its livelihood from agriculture and its kindred trades. Industries worth mentioning are hardly existent, except those based on agriculture and forestry. Consequently, the country is most densely settled where the soil is most fertile. The best soil is to be found on the diluvial plateaux with their boulder clay of the glacial period, and in the marshy, rich in humus lowlands of the primitive river valleys, reclaimed by heaviest cultivation and melioration work, while the so-called "Sandrs", i. e. the plains turned sandy by the water of the former inland ice, mostly serve forest-culture, they being only sparsely populated. The various echeloned terminal moraines traversing the country have soils quite different from each other; and,

*The Soil of
the Grenzmark.*

*Geological
Formations*



thus, the geological map affords us also a graphic picture of the density of population.

The province is traversed by the primitive river valley extending from Thorn to Eberswalde, i. e. the depression of the Netze and the lower course of the Warthe Rivers, and the primitive river valley extending from Warsaw to Berlin in the territory of the Odra River and its tributaries, while in the south it borders also on the primitive river valley extending from Glogau to Baruth.

As shown on the map, fertile diluvial plateaux are scattered over all counties of the province.

Extensive sandy areas ("Sandrs") in the form of woodlands are in close range of the Brahe, Küdow, Plietnitz, Pilow, Döberitz and Drage Rivers, coming from the Baltic chain of hills, and the territory crossed by the Odra River and its tributaries. Almost entirely covered with forests is the so-called "Zwischenstromland", an area situated in the County of Schwerin between the Netze and the lower Warthe Rivers. This is Germany's most extensive territory formed by inland dunes, having a west-easterly extension of more than 60 kilometers, and projecting far into Poland.

If one adds to these types of landscape the irregularly shaped chain of hills recognizable as terminal moraines of the glacial period, for instance, the Baltic system of terminal moraines with its echeloned spurs in the northermost part of the province, the spur of the terminal moraine in the County of Schwerin, in Central Posen, and the South Posen terminal moraines in the County of Fraustadt, then the geological prerequisites to the colonization of the country will have been explained.

In describing the colonization of the territory,

no account can be taken of prehistoric times. It will, perhaps, suffice to mention a few fundamental archaeological facts relative to prehistoric colonization:

Contrary to the fact that the presence of man in this region is not traceable as regards the early stone age, there are such traces applicable to the middle stone age. In the later stone age, the colonization of the territory now the Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia must have been rather dense, as is proved by numerous archaeological finds.

In the Grenzmark, especially in Schmirtenau and Schrotz, highly interesting finds of the earliest bronze age have been recovered, some of which tend to cast an entirely new light upon the colonization of North-Eastern Germany. From the middle bronze age up to the early iron age there lived in this country, south of the Netze River, people belonging to the so-called "Lausitzer Kulturkreis", held by some Slav scientists to have been the original Slavs, while the overwhelming majority of the prehistorians take them to have been Illyrians; and others, again, consider them as having been Germans. As has been proved, there lived in the Grenzmark at that time people of the Nordic type who may well be considered as having been Germans.

In the early iron age, the territory north of the Netze River was invaded by German tribes, called "Stone-Box Men" (so named after their way of burying the dead), who later on migrated to the south-east in order to give room to other Nordic German tribes. The finds left by them are so numerous as to warrant the conclusion that at that time the density of population of the Northern Grenzmark was not much lower than during our time.

During the first ante-Christian centuries, the Burgundians, coming from Scandinavia, settled on the banks of the Netze and Warthe Rivers, and the Vandals in the southern territory of the Grenzmark. Not until these tribes, except a few remnants of them, had emigrated during the great migration of people did the Slavs, coming from the east, invade the country, imprinting upon it the stamp of their own civilization considerably inferior to that of those Germanic tribes who had left the country. To the north of the Netze River, it was the Pomeranians, to the south of it, the Poles. These Slav tribes fiercely fought one another, and bloody battles took place at the Netze River which formed the boundary. Here, too, were situated the bases and border strongholds, such as Zantoch, Driesen, Czarnikau, Usch, and Nakel. Repeatedly, although only temporarily, the Pomeranians were subjugated by the Poles. However, in the course of centuries the Poles spread increasingly towards the north of the Netze, gradually forcing the Pomeranians, whose descendants are the present Cassubes, to retreat. Today, the old Pomeranians, or Cassubes, are only found in the northermost corner of the Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia, in the former West-Prussian Counties of Karthaus, Neustadt, Putzig, here and there also in the Counties of Behrent and Konitz, and in some parts of the Counties of Bütow and Lauenburg.

As to the prehistoric settlements, it deserves being mentioned that, according to most prehistorians and experts on the primitive conditions of the country, the areas and vegetative districts, occupied by those people, and tilled by means of their primitive implements, must have been different from those preferred by later settlers.

The former, and especially the Neolithics, settled to some larger extent on the open areas of the country, i. e. on the heath-covered prairie land, where they took possession of the light soil, while the settlers of the Middle Ages used the heavy soil for agricultural purposes. During early prehistoric times, the heavy soils of the diluvial plateaux, densely covered with forests, had been cleared and cultivated, a development interrupted, however, by the great migration of people. On their advance towards the west, the Slavs came upon an almost deserted territory, a virgin country, which they developed according to their own standard of civilization. But there are still numerous extensive forests bidding defiance to the colonization technique of the Slavs who did not dare either to tackle the cultivation of the boggy primitive river valleys. These conditions changed considerably when the Germans took again possession of the country.

This new Germanization of the borderland commenced with the so-called First German Colonization of the East, justly termed the recovery of ancient German soil, and started in the 13th century. Irrespective of whether the settlers were called, and started to work, by the Teutonic Order, by German, Pomeranian, and Polish princes, or by the abbots of the newly erected German monasteries, the development showed always similar characteristics, and the same principles, namely, the granting of liberal-sized land holdings, extensive civic liberties, and the benefits of German rights in law and equity. Thus, besides monasteries, hundreds of German villages, fiefs, and towns, were founded until, after about 200 years, the stream of settlers coming from the west gradually ebbed, and even periodical reversals

occured due to the flaring up of a national-Polish movement.

From the end of the 16th up to the middle of the 18th centuries there followed a second wave of German colonization, mainly restricted, however, as far as the Grenzmark is concerned, to the Netze territory belonging to Greater Poland. It was at that time that especially those settlements, designated as "Holländereien", or "Hauländer" (Dutch settlements), and numerous new towns, were created.

The third period during which German settlers established themselves again in the country, was the era of Frederick the Great, although the extent of this colonization work is, on the whole, greatly over-estimated, considerable though it has been.

A fourth phase of colonization by German peasants, caused by the sharp national controversies in the Ostmark, started in Bismarck's time. In that struggle for "blood and soil" the German national interests have suffered rather than gained, when compared with Polish interests. Due to Polish propaganda, the whole world appears to believe that the Germanization of Posen and West Prussia had not started until after, and due to, the measures taken by the Prussian Government. That, however, is a fundamental error which will be dealt with later.

And now, due to rural and urban settlement work, so energetically launched by the State and the communities, we witness a fifth phase of this colonization work.

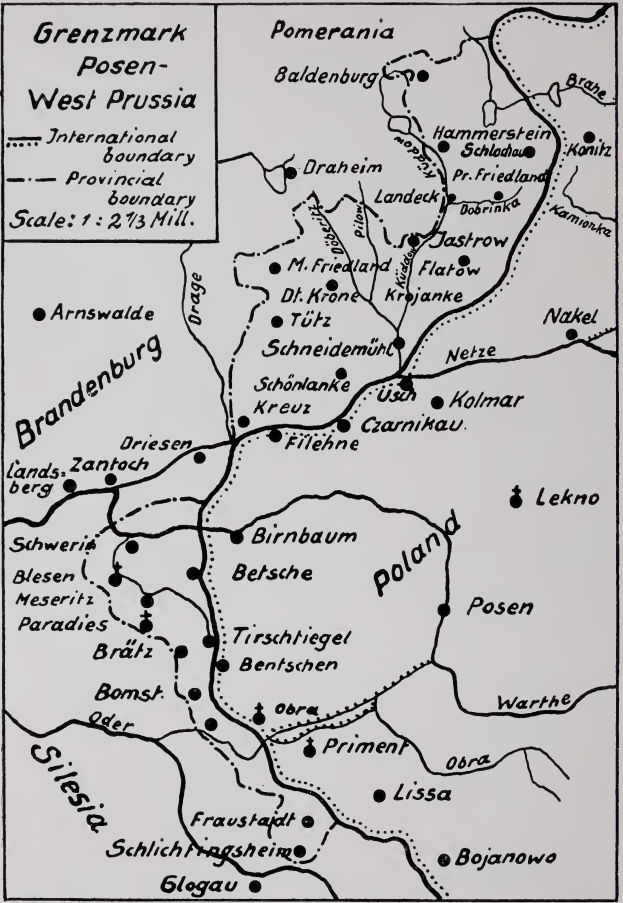
It is to be hoped that it will be productive of full success, and that the words of the Führer Adolf Hitler, namely, "to stop the eastward migration of Germans", and thus, by means of a dense popula-

tion, inseparably devoted to the soil, secure the still depopulated German East as an integral part of the German nation, will come true.

German Colonization in the Middle Ages

It is authentically proved that the first colonization of the Grenzmark was undertaken by German Cistercian monasteries. Soon after 1150, two of such monasteries, Lekno, near Wongrowitz, and Łąd, near Peisern, were founded in Poland. The monks came from the Monastery of Altenberg, near Cologne, following a call from the Polish King Mieszko III, the Elder, who, while on a journey to the Rhine, and to the native country of his mother, a Countess of Berg, had become familiar with the cultural achievements of the "grey" monks at Altenberg. The Cistercian settlements at Łąd and Lekno, together with the Monastery at Obra, founded in 1231, are called the "Cologne Monasteries", due to the fact that the monks enjoyed chartered rights inasmuch as only sons of Cologne citizens were admitted as brethren. The Cologne Monastery of Obra had done important colonization and cultural work in the Grenzmark territory; but its activities are greatly excelled by the two Cistercian Monasteries of Paradies and Semmritz-Blesen, both founded in 1232 by the Monasteries of Lehnin and Dobrilugk, and the Monastery of Fehlen, founded as a branch of Paradies Monastery in 1278, and moved to Priment in 1418.

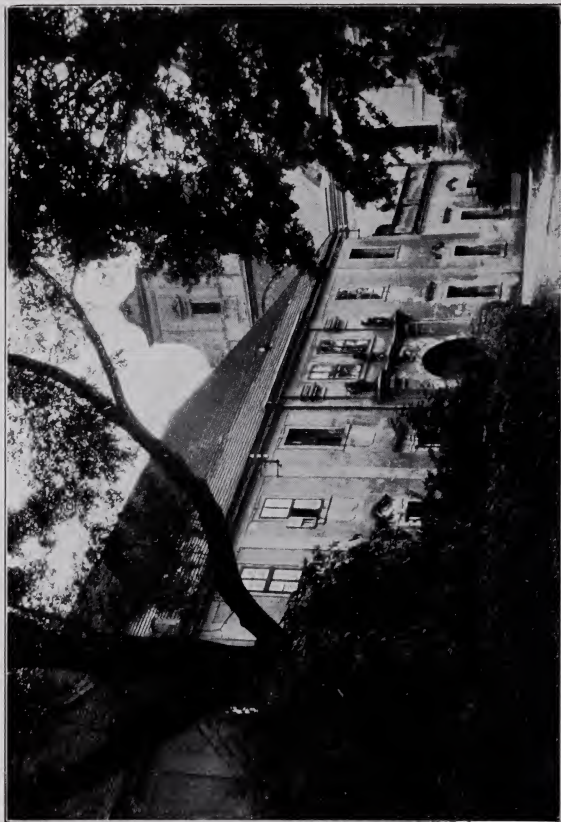
By a deed of donation, executed in the first third of the 13th century by the Polish Duke Vladislaus Odonicz, the giant inaccessible forests in the mar-



shes of the Netze River, between Kreuz and Nakel, comprising large territories, were also handed over for the purpose of cultivation and colonization to the Cistercian monks, i. e. the Silesian Monasteries of Leubus and Heinrichau. They consisted of 3000 Franconian hides of land (a. 725 square kilometers) near Filehne, and an area between Nakel and Flatow at least as extensive. However, at that time, the opening up and colonization of the Netze district did not make any headway, quite contrary to the great success achieved by the monasteries in the Odra territory where they called in, and settled, German peasants. Gradually, the Monastery of Paradies acquired in the Grenzmark territory, and in the March of Brandenburg joining it in the west, the following 23 villages, which were either placed under German law, or newly founded, and settled with German peasants: Jordan, Paradies, Leimnitz, Kalau, Neuhöfchen, Rannersdorf, Schindelmühl, Merzdorf, Liebenau, Neudörfel, Witten, Altenhof, Gräditz, Hochwalde, Pieske, Lugau, Wischen, Schönborn, Seeren, Kutschlau, Nasslettel, Koschmin and Opperwitz.

The property of the monastery comprised approximately 74.000 acres (30.000 hectares). The taxes to be paid by the peasants, who fared very well, were only small.

Similarly successful was the colonization work undertaken by the Monastery of Semmritz-Blesen (moved to Blesen in 1407). Its property comprised 10 German villages, namely, Neudorf, Falkenwalde, Althöfchen, Oscht, Semmritz, Poppe, Kalzig, Schwirle, Rokitten, Gollmütz, and, furthermore, the Town of Blesen. It was due to the initiative of this monastery that all these settlements were either



The Monastery of Paradies Main Portal

Photogr.: H. J. Schmitz

newly founded, or placed under German law. The Monastery of Blesen owned one third, i. e. the entire south-western part, of the County of Schwerin-on-Warthe.

The colonizatory activities of the southernmost Monastery of Fehlen-Priment comprised the territory near Unruhstadt as well as part of the "Fraustädter Ländchen". Here also, numerous new villages, like Lupitze and Schussenze, standing under German law, and colonized by Germans, were founded. The Cologne Monastery of Obra appears to have experienced difficulties in settling German peasants in its territory, because it did not succeed in the same manner as did the other Cistercian monasteries. That was perhaps due to the fact that the mother-monastery of Altenberg was situated too far away to warrant a uniform and permanent immigration of new settlers. To the Monastery of Obra there belonged those villages in the County of Bomst which are today predominantly Polish, such as Kramzig, Neukramzig, and Reckenwalde.

Following the Reformation, the monasteries in Poland were Polonized, contrary to their chartered rights, and in spite of the protests levelled by the German monks; the peasants, however, remained German. According to a deed made out by Duke Vladislaus Odonicz in 1210, the Monastery of Pforta had been granted the right of establishing settlers in the Stewardship of Priment, abounding in lakes and forests. This appears to have been the case, although there is no conclusive proof to that effect. It may well be that the origin of some of the villages of the Fraustädter Ländchen is due to this privilege. However, it was not only the monasteries which caused German peasants to settle in the

country, but ecclesiastical and secular landowners, too, shared in the colonization work in a similar manner.

At that time there sprang into existence in what is today the County of Fraustadt those conspicuously long-stretched forest villages, so characteristic of the Fraustadt district. Here, as in many other border districts of Poland, was a giant frontier forest, called "Preseka", and the villages were located far into the forest after it had been cleared. Colonization was essentially carried out by the Dukes of Glogau to whom this territory belonged up to 1343.

In the Obra territory, the forests had already been extensively cleared prior to the first German wave of immigration, and the fertile, diluvial plateaux were already partly settled by Polish peasants, though the Polish settlements were small and scattered. They belonged to the three Stewardships, or Burgraviates, of Meseritz, Bentschen, and Priment. Due to the reconstructive activities of the German peasants, change of the lay-out of the villages and the land, granting of the German law, and the like, there now developed out of these wretched and scattered Polish settlements, partly inhabited by fishermen, cottagers, and servants of the noble landowners, splendid German villages inhabited by free and proud peasants. Out of nothing, or, as the saying went, "from a wild root", there sprang other German villages. The present aspect of a village still permits of the conclusion as to whether it had been placed under German law, or newly founded. Ere long, the whole picture of the country had been transformed, so much more since now German towns, too, forming economic centres of rural districts, came into existence.



*The Castle
in Meseritz
a. 1790
(After a water
colour painting by
Alberti)*

The procedure applied to the villages, according to which a leader, or contractor, in old documents mostly called "locator", was appointed to distribute the hides of land, and direct the settlement work, finding his reward in his later being appointed hereditary village magistrate of the respective new German community, was also applied to the development of the new towns springing into existence.



Here, too, there was a contractor whose leadership was accepted, and whose instructions were followed, by the new citizens. Unless the planning of German towns adapted itself to Slav settlements already existent, it followed a definite scheme, and all towns show a great regularity of planning, that is to say, the market place occupies the centre from which there start the streets crossing each other at right angles. In most cases, the locator became the bailiff, or judge, of the new town. Prior to German

immigration there existed already in Poland small market towns and town-like settlements, mostly in proximity of the strongholds of the castellans, but they were devoid of all characteristic features of a town, particularly self-administration. It was the German law which facilitated the creation of



The town of Baldenburg a. 1810

towns in the proper sense of the word, such as Fraustadt, Meseritz, Schwerin, and Tirschtiegel, and, somewhat later, Bomst, Blesen, Brätz, and Betsche, in the southern part of the Grenzmark; Deutsch Krone, Tütz, Schloppe, Märkisch Friedland, and Schneidemühl in the district between the Drage and Küddow Rivers; furthermore, Flatow and Krojanke in the Kraine; and Schlochau, Preussisch Friedland, Hammerstein, Baldenburg, and

Landeck, in the Grenzmark territory belonging to the Teutonic Order of Knights.

In the B \ddot{o} thingau, most likely so named after the old fortress of B \ddot{o} thin, or Bitom, situated on the banks of the lake bearing the same name, in the district between the Netze, Drage, and K \ddot{u} ddow Rivers, the first settling of German farmers and burghers was started by the Ascanian Margraves, and by the Order of the Knights-Templars. The Cistercians have not been active in the northern Grenzmark but farther to the east on the banks of the Brahe River where they founded the Monastery of Byszewo-Crone. We learned already that they did not exploit the extensive holdings north of the Netze River which were deeded to them by Duke Vladislaus Odonicz.

After a long war between the Poles, the Pomeranians and the Ascanian Margraves, the territory between the Drage and K \ddot{u} ddow Rivers fell to Brandenburg, and was made a part of the New-March. The bigger part of the southern Grenzmark, west of the Obra River, belonged also, but only temporarily, to the Ascanians. In those times, the sovereignty of the territory changed repeatedly. At one time, the country belonged to Poland, at another time to Silesia, or Brandenburg, until, in 1332, it finally fell to Poland. In the territory of Deutsch Krone, the Ascanians ruled from 1296 to 1368. Acquired by Valdemar the Great, it was, in turn, ceded by Otto the Lazy to Casimir the Great of Poland. Beginning with the Ascanian rule, there started immediately a lively colonization which, however, advanced only as far as to the D \ddot{o} beritz River. It was only in later days that the forests situated towards the east of that river were penetrated by



Castle of the Counts of Wedell, in Tütz

Photogr.: H. J. Schmitz

German colonization. Jointly with the Margraves of Brandenburg, Brandenburgian noble families moved into the country, so, for instance, the Wedell, Goltz, Güntersberg, Liebenow, Schöningh, Borke, Liebenthal, and other families. They acquired extensive land holdings, and supported colonization in an outstanding manner. Thus, and partly by the placing of Slav settlements under German law, partly by the founding of new settlements, numerous German villages sprang into existence, whose names we find mentioned in the 1337 edition of the "Landbook of the New-March", and in clerical records. Four towns were also founded, the names of which have been mentioned hereinabove. Deutsch Krone, or Arnskrone, near the village of Walcz, situated on the banks of Lake Radun, was founded in

1303 by the noblemen Ulrich Schöningh and Rudolf von Lebendal. Under Polish rule, this town, the official name of which continued for a long time to be Walcz, was the headquarters of a Starost, and of a "Grod"-Court. In 1306, Tütz was founded by the Counts of Wedell, whose stately castle continues in a well preserved condition; and Märkisch Friedland was founded in 1314 by the same family. The old records state that the brothers Nicolaus and Johann Knobelsdorf were the locators, "Uffleger", of this town. The town of Schloppe was founded about 1330.

In the same manner in which the Cistercian Order of Monks played an important role in the colonization and Germanization of the southern Grenzmark, the ecclesiastical knightly orders played their parts in the northern districts of this territory. At those times it was quite often customary to have the ecclesiastical militant orders take care of the protection of unsafe and contested border territories, and at one time one prince, at another time another prince, appealed to the knightly monks for help. Already in 1224, Vladislaus Odonicz had deeded to the Teutonic Order of Knights 500 hides of land situated around "Lake Hibitsma" and on the banks of the Pilow River. It may be that the former is identical with Lake Böthin; and in this connection the name of the present community of Preussendorf is quite interesting. In 1233, the same Polish duke enfeoffed the Knights-Templars with 3000 hides of land on the banks of the Döberitz River. Soon, these large holdings became bigger. In 1238, the knights were given the Village of Ozechno, situated at the important crossing over the Drage River, near its confluence with the Netze River; and in 1249, the wi-

dow of Peter von Lack, a powerful landowner, after having secured the consent of Duke Przemislav, made over to them the village of Cron which they raised to be the headquarters of a commandery. However, that village must not be mistaken for the present town of Deutsch Krone, the name of which was Walcz at that time. In 1286 Duke Przemislav enlarged the territory belonging to the Knights-Templars by adding to it the land situated between Lake Dratzig and Lake Pielburg where, in 1291, the knights founded the town of Tempelburg, and built a strong castle which they made the headquarters of their commandery. Here, as everywhere, they founded splendid German villages. After the dissolution of the Order of the Knights-Templars, in 1312, the Knights of St. John (Hospitallers) fell heir to the former; but the Ascanian Margraves prevented the knights for a long time from entering upon their inheritance, until, in 1345, it was handed over to them. But the knights were forced to defend their enormous holdings against the Pomeranians in the north, and the Poles in the south. For that reason, they built in the north, on the isthmus between Lake Dratzig and Lake Sareben, the Stronghold of Draheim, the ruins of which are still to be seen, but absurdly called by the present population the "Starost's Castle" for no other reason than for its having served last as the official headquarters of a Polish starost. To the south of the Tempelburg holdings, and on the Döberitz River below the village of Machlin, there stood a smaller strong castle, called Johannisburg, to render protection from the Poles. Nothing, except the name of the landmark, has been left of this stronghold.

In 1361, the Knights of St. John transferred

the biggest part of their holdings in the form of a hereditary fief to their vassal von der Goltz. Thus, the Goltz family secured tremendous landholdings, including the villages of Brotzen, Milkow, Machlin, Klausdorf, Lüben, Böskau, Walbruch, Hoffstädt, Dammlang, Hohenstein, Daber, Appelwerder, Neugoltz, Kessburg, Stranz, Quiram, Rosenfelde, Wittkow, and others. It appears that the Goltzes were on excellent terms with their peasants, as is evidenced by various historic reports come to us. Generally speaking, one is justified in assuming that the German noble families residing in the Deutsch Krone territory, protected their respective peasants effectively from Polish encroachments upon their rights. To the Knights of St. John who in 1368, at the time of the transfer of this territory to Poland, had sworn allegiance to King Casimir, the personal union between Poland and Lithuania became disastrous, due to deadly enmity harboured by King Vladislav Jagiello against the Teutonic Order of Knights. Jagiello considered the Johannites the friends and political partisans of the Teutonic Knights, and, therefore, his enemies, and deprived them of all their holdings in Poland. The strong castle of Draheim was conquered in 1407, which meant the end of the Johannites in the Deutsch Krone territory.

The result achieved in the Middle Ages from the colonization of the territory between the Drage and Küddow Rivers was that the loamy and marly plateaux, i. e. the north-western and central parts of this territory, were densely covered with German village-like settlements, as they are today. At the end of that period, most of the territory's villages, and all of the towns, were already existent, though with

a smaller number of inhabitants. The densely wooded, marshy lowland along the Netze River, with its northern echeloned valley, were not opened up yet, neither was the sandy territory between the Döberitz and Küddow Rivers in the north-east of the country.

Documents and historic reports tell us but very little of the German colonization of the Kraina, i. e. the present County of Flatow. The district was under the authority of the Stewardship of Nakel. Originally belonging to East Pomerania, Pomorania or Pomerellia, its sovereignty changed repeatedly between East Pomerania and Poland. The domain of the second last Pomerellian Duke Svantopluk, or Svantopolk, extended up to the Netze River; from him we have a few deeds of donation regarding the rights of ownership of land. Upon the death of his childless successor Mestvin II, the biggest part of East Pomerania fell to the Teutonic Order of Knights. Possession of the Kraina was still contested, but since the signing of the treaties of Kalisch, in 1343, and Trensatz, in 1349, it belonged to Poland. The Dobrinka and Kamionka Rivers, also called the Dobrin and Kamin Rivulets, formed the border between the Kraina and the land belonging to the Teutonic Order.

The conditions prevailing in the Kraina territory are best characterized by a remark made by Archbishop Vincent of Gnesen who stated relative to the desolate region between Flatow, Vandsburg, and the Netze River, deeded, as above mentioned, by Vladislav Odonicz to the Cistercian monks of Leubus and Heinrichau, that nobody had any recollection of any agricultural activities that might have ever taken place there. Nor have the Cistercian

monks ever started cultivating this desolate, inaccessible country continuously visited by foreign invasions. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the struggles fought out in this country between Poles and Pomeranians found their continuation in the heavy fights between the Teutonic Order of Knights and the Poles. That accounts perhaps for the fact that the Kraina did not share in the German colonization of the Middle Ages to the same extent as did the other parts of the Grenzmark. True, here also German burghers and peasants arrived with the intention of settling, but, compared with other regions, they appeared only in small numbers, comparatively late, and mostly at the time of Casimir the Great and his successors. There was, furthermore, and contrary to the region between the Drage and Küddow Rivers, or the Schlochau region, no nobility of the sword to protect the German peasants and burghers. The noble landlords residing in the region were mostly Poles or Pomeranians, while in the time to come the German nobility, domiciled in the region, did not lag behind the Polish nobility in exploiting their respective subjects. Extensive land holdings were in the hands of the Danaborski, Götzendorff-Grabowski, Potulicki, Grudzinski, and Sulkowski families, while the v. Wedell, Güntersberg, Weyher, and Borke families exercised some temporary influence. The terrible invasions by which this region in particular was devastated, depopulated the country, and destroyed the successes achieved by German immigrants in the Middle Ages, a fate not spared to the towns of Flatow and Krojanke either. Flatow had risen from an old Slav lordly estate, and been granted prior to 1370 already the Magdeburg municipal privileges, while Krojanke,

though older than Flatow, did not acquire such privileges until 1420.

Today, the County of Flatow is the one whose German character is most endangered, and having the highest percentage of Poles. Although the low density of German colonization in the Middle Ages,



Schlochau, and Belfry of the Order's Commandery

Photogr.: Th. Engel

and the conditions described above, are possibly some of the reasons, they are not the main causes to which this fact is due.

The historic development of the region north of the Dobrinka and Kamionka Rivers, i. e. the present County of Schlochau, took a quite different course. Upon the extinction of the Pomerelian dynasty of the Samborides, the Brandenburgian Margraves, the Poles, and the Teutonic Order of

Knights, quarrelled about the heritage. By the Treaty of Soldin, in 1309, made with Valdemar of Brandenburg, and finally by the Treaty of Kalisch, in 1343, made with the Poles, the country fell to the Teutonic Order of Knights. This acquisition was of extraordinary importance because it was this region that formed the bridge between the East Prussian territory of the Teutonic Order and the German Empire, and through which ran the road bringing succour from the latter. It was, therefore, in the interest of the Teutonic Order to attach great importance to the protection of the Schlochau region, and it proceeded quite systematically in solidifying both the internal and external conditions of this territory. While in the Pomerellian time the Stewardship of Ziethen had formed the administrative centre, the order now selected a better place for establishing a commandery, and for the construction of a stronghold. In 1320 it started the construction of the strong castle on the isthmus between the two lakes which have been named "Amtsseen". This construction work lasted several decades, but the result was that the castle was one of the strongest of all of the Order's strongholds. Even today, the ruins and the defiant belfry of the strong castle form a distinctive landmark of Schlochau County. Upon the completion of this strong castle, and the establishment of a town joining it, which latter is mentioned as early as 1348, the Order proceeded with the construction of additional border strongholds.

First of all, however, we must ask ourselves the question in what condition the Schlochau region was at the time when the order took it over. While in the time of the Samborides German settlers had

already come to Pomerellia, none of them appear to have settled in the Schlochau region, where there were only very small Slav villages and baronial estates, the Slav-Cassubian population being extremely thin, and widely scattered over the country, which is not astonishing because the biggest part of this territory, the northern part of the commandery in particular, was covered with mighty forests and heathy steppes. Even today, there are giant forest areas, comprising six forester's districts in the still German parts of the former County of Schlochau alone. In those days, however, the wooded areas and the heathlands were still more extensive than they are today. It is the region of the Brahe and Küddow "Sandrs" which, for the biggest part, is unproductive, quite contrary to the south with its fertile, diluvial plateaux. It was this latter region where the Teutonic Order of Knights started to settle German peasants, and which formed the especially threatened Polish border. So it happened that a strip of land, 20 kilometers wide, was formed north of the Dobrinka River, and settled with German villages and fiefs, forming, so to speak, the glacis of the Stronghold of Schlochau, and of the territory belonging to the Teutonic Order. Thus, the Order followed the same policy adopted today by ourselves, namely, the establishment of a dense row of German settlements along the menaced border as a rampart against the advance of foreign races and nationalities. It was essential to have the Dobrinka border occupied by people on which the Order might rely in times of emergency. Thereafter, and directly along the border, the advanced protected bases of Preussisch Friedland and Landeck were established. In 1354,

the strongly fortified basis of Preussisch Friedland was granted the "Handfeste", i. e. German municipal privileges. Landeck, so called because three countries joined here in one and the same corner, was originally a "Wildhaus", i. e. a small border stronghold as often established by the Teutonic Order in the so-called "Wilderness", a border strip of land between the Order's territory and Lithuania, and remaining unsettled for the time being. It was not until 1450 that the village situated in front of the castle developed into Landeck, today the smallest town in the Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia.

After safeguarding its southern border against Poland, the Order set to work to protect in a similar manner its western border from the unreliable Dukes of West Pomerania. Here, in the last third of the 14th century, German villages, and two strongholds, Hammerstein and Baldenburg, were established. These strongholds, too, around which there soon rose German towns, were constructed as "Wildhaus" types. About 1382, the two towns were granted municipal privileges. Extensive ruins have remained of the Hammerstein stronghold, but no traces have been left of the Order's castles at Baldenburg and Landeck.

In the northern and north-eastern parts of the commandery, where there are wide stretches of heath covered with pine, only a few German settlements were established at that time. This region was remote from the threatened borders, and the poor soil did not appeal to the German immigrant peasants. In this region, the estates and rural communities remained for a long time in possession of native Cassubian families who stuck to their traditional privileges and primitive Slav manner of tilling the

soil. Later on, however, here, too, the Order owned farms and corn mills.

In less than a century the Teutonic Order had succeeded in securing to the Germans almost the whole territory of the Commandery of Schlochau, thereby achieving a cultural task of the first order. It is particularly the fertile diluvial plateaux which were opened to cultivation, and German culture and civilization, and it is only the marshy forests of the primitive river valleys on the Netze, Warthe and Odra Rivers, the big and unproductive, barren, pine-covered heathlands of the sandy areas, and the dune-covered region between the Warthe and Netze Rivers, which have as yet not been penetrated by German settlers, a few exceptions notwithstanding.

Following the call "Naer Oostland willen wy ryden" ("Towards the East we will ride"), the German monks, peasants, and burghers, entered also the country beyond the borders of the Grenzmark. In the 14th century, all these territories were full of German life, but in the interior of Poland the Germans, entering the country during the first period of immigration, suffered severe reverses from the National-Polish Movement starting under the Jagiellons, and from the lordly estates just being formed, while the Germans in the western border regions, including our own province, overcame this period of Polonization fairly unscathed, thanks to their direct contact with the German West and a certain support derived therefrom.

German Immigration between the 16th and 18th Centuries

Towards the end of the 16th century, a new wave of German immigration started, lasting till well into the 18th century. Although in the meantime the influx of Germans migrating to the East had not entirely ceased, it had become very sparse just the same, but now it increased mightily. However, German immigration between the 16th and 18th centuries was due to other reasons than the colonization which took place in the Middle Ages, during which the demand for land prevailing among the peasants had caused them to migrate towards the East, the space warranting the German people's existence having become too small. Now, it was the qualms of conscience due to religious persecutions, and partly also to the greatly increased taxes imposed upon them by the landlords, which drove them on. The Counter-Reformation had started, causing thousands and thousands of diligent people, devoted to their Protestant faith, to leave their native country. Alba's terrorism in the Netherlands, and the Battle of the "White Mountain" near Prague, in 1620, were the fanals of that movement.

Most of the German settlers, both peasants and burghers, comprising the second epoch of colonization, belonged to the Protestant Church. They expected that Poland would grant them free exercise of religion, and the Polish landlords, part of whom had also embraced the new Protestant teachings, welcomed the arrival of these diligent and efficient people, and readily assigned them land, because, after the passing of a few tax-exempt years, this

meant increased revenues. By means of printed, alluring advertising pamphlets, distributed in the German States, the Polish magnates even appealed to German peasants to settle in Poland. Some of these pamphlets, one, for instance, issued in 1641 in behalf of Schwersenz, another one in 1652 in behalf of Bomst, are among the documents surviving from those days. The manner in which land was taken up was partly the same as the one in vogue during the first German wave of immigration: a contractor, or locator, negotiating with the respective landlords, they assigning their holdings to the new settlers, he himself receiving in turn a larger acreage, and becoming invested with the hereditary village magistrateship. That was the origin of the "Schulzendörfer". (Villages administered by a "Schulze" = magistrate.) In most cases, however, the founding of a village was started in a quite different manner, inasmuch as all the peasants intending to found a village secured a joint foundation privilege from the landlord. Neither did they acquire the land on the basis of a hereditary tenure but on the basis of a lease extending over from 30 to 60 years, with the proviso of their being entitled to lease the land to third parties if they should find it convenient to do so. They themselves elected their village magistrate, and reserved to themselves also free exercise of their religion. In most cases they also agreed with their landlords as to the payment of taxes, and as these were higher than those paid by the peasants of the "Schulzendörfer", they made also sure that they were not to be required to furnish personal or team services. In the Netze region and elsewhere the landlords granted them quite often hunting privileges in reference to beasts of prey, ducks, and

geese. They were very proud, honest and free people who had learned their lessons from the pressure exerted upon them by the landlords in their native country, and took good care to safeguard themselves against it.

The first settlers of this kind were Dutchmen, in Polish called "Olendry", or "Olendrovie", and "Hollandones" in Latin documents. Soon, however, other German settlers followed the example set to them in the taking up of land; and though these villages are called "Dutch Villages", or "Hauländer", there follows by no means that the founders of the respective villages were always Dutchmen. The word "Hauland", in addition to the village-name, indicates always that the village has been planned in Dutch fashion and not been set up following the clearing — "Aus-hauen" — of a forest, as is quite often, but erroneously, believed. In old documents and reports, such village names carry almost always the addition "Holländer", and popular usage applied this appendix to a village name as late as in the time of our grandfathers. Most likely, the change into "Hauland" is due to phonetic reasons. (Compare: "old" = "aud" in the Dutch language.)

The spread of Dutch villages in Poland is illucidating. At first, we find them in the lowlands of the Vistula River, then up that river, and along the Netze River. Later on, the younger peasant sons move into the lowlands of the Warthe River, then onwards up the Obra and Warthe Rivers; and in the course of time the younger generations advance in a south-easterly direction as far as Volhynia in order to find new possibilities for gaining their livelihoods. All this can be exactly and historically tra-

ced. How numerous the "Hauland"-villages are is proved by the fact that in the former Province of Posen alone the existence of 400 of such villages can be proved.

It is true that those daring eastward pioneers when arriving in our home country found the best soil already occupied by others, and for that reason advanced into the marshy lowlands and to the wooded slopes of the primitive river valleys where they performed high-grade cultivation work. They were mostly North Germans, primarily Dutchmen (Holland belonged to Germany at that time) who had learned in their native country the art of how to drain and meliorate the soil of lowlands, and who thus succeeded in soon clearing the marshy forests along the Warthe, Netze, and Odra Rivers, turning them into arable land and meadows. The Pawinski tax records of 1579, accurately registering all of the settlements of that time, prove that prior to the arrival of the Dutch only few widely scattered human settlements could be found, occupied by fishermen and coopers. Now things took a turn.

Along the Netze River the following long-stretched villages sprang into existence: Ehrbardorf, Mariendorf, Ludwigsdorf, Follstein, Neuhöfen, Putzig-Hauland, Usch-Hauland, furthermore, Luckatz and Glashütte. On the banks of the Warthe River, the Dutch settlements of Schweinert, Krintze, Alt- and Neu-Lauske, Marienwalde, Rosenthal-Hauland, Gross- and Klein-Krebbel, and Striche-Hauland, were established. Others were founded in the Odra region, such as Alt-Odra-Hauland, Alt- and Neu-Jaromierz-Hauland, Wilze, Droniki, Alt- and Neu-Tepperbuden, and others. When there was no more lowland soil available, the settlers proceeded also to



*Houses with front porches, on the village street in
Lauske*

*Due to their ramshackle condition, the porches of
two houses have been closed by means of brickwork
(From Frase's "Wanderbuch")*

the sandy regions along the Odra River which had a very poor soil. Thus, the Hauland villages of Birkenhorst, Eschenwalde, Reinzig, and Schierzig, all in the County of Meseritz, were developed. Even in the most unproductive region of the whole province, the wooded dune lands in the County of Schwerin, Holländer settlements were founded, such as Schneidemühl-Hauland, Kaza, and Seewitz. The new settlers consisted chiefly of younger peasant sons to whom the paternal farms no longer offered

any opportunities, and who now advanced into the increasingly less fertile, or more easterly situated, regions. In the southern Grenzmark, from 30 to 40 per cent of all communities can be traced to Dutch settlements.

In the northern Grenzmark, Dutch settlements are found along the Netze River only. Here, and during the second period of colonization, additional villages, standing under the authority of a village magistrate, were founded by peasants mostly coming from the south of Further Pomerania, from the neighbourhood of Dramburg, and also from the northern New-March. Inasmuch as they were not younger peasant sons out for acquiring land, the reasons for their emigrating are to be found in the



*Old "Holländer" farm house in Alt-Tepperbuden
Photogr.: R. Frase*

excessive pressure brought to bear upon them in the form of service exacted by their landlords, and in taxes altogether too high, or in alluring promises held out to them by Polish magnates. By means of negotiations with Poland, both the landlords and the respective sovereigns tried in vain to force the return of the fugitive peasants who expected greater liberties in Poland. The Great Elector, too, carried on such negotiations. However, it deserves mentioning that some of the peasants returned later, perfectly disillusioned. So, for instance, the colonist Johannes Christoph Breitzkreuz, owner of one half of a farm in Putzig, a village under a village magistrate, who emigrated to the Oderbruch in order to escape the unprecedented pressure and increased taxes imposed upon him by his landlord Radolinski, and who, in 1763, appealed to Frederick the Great for help against Count Radolinski, attaching to his appeal a copy of the privileges granted him.

At that time, a great number of villages administered by village magistrates, and enjoying privileges which even today are a matter of record, were founded in the domain of the baronial estates of Filehne, Czarnikau, and Behle, today part of Netze County. Here, in 1592, an attempt was once made by the village magistrate Martin, of Schönow, on the strength of a privilege granted him, to settle in Klein-Drensen 12 Polish born peasants and a number of crofters. Evidently, this attempt proved a failure, because Klein-Drensen is known to be a purely German village.

The so-called "Schulzendörfer" differ almost invariably from the so-called "Holländereien" (Dutch villages) in village and landmark planning. The latter ones, as far as they are situated in Netze

County, are far-stretching villages with the fields and meadows arranged in long regular strips, while the former render the impression of a cluster-like arrangement showing an irregular shape of fields and meadows. Following the end of the 16th century, the region of the County of Deutsch Krone, as far as situated east of the Döberitz River, was also settled inasmuch as its pine-covered sandy heathlands made cultivation worth while at all. It did not take the settlers long to detect the somewhat better soil, and it is for that reason that, still at that time, the western part of the County of Flatow was immigrated by German settlers.

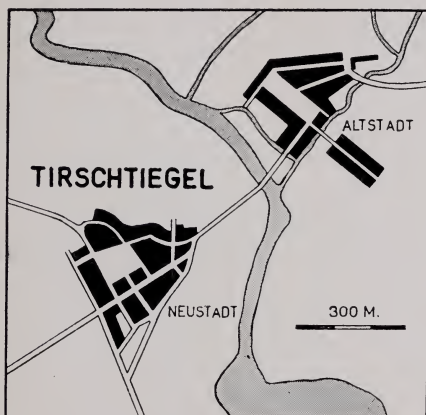
In addition to numerous foundings of villages, new towns were also created during the second period of colonization in which Silesians in particular took a part in the south of the Grenzmark. In some parts of Silesia and Bohemia the Counter-Reformation was carried through recklessly, and many of the Protestant refugees looked for a new home in southern and western Posen. Towards the end of the 16th century, the Bohemian Brethren, for instance, whose main domicile was at Lissa, the hometown of Johann Amos Comenius, founded the town of Bojanovo in Southern Poland. In 1638, Silesians founded the town of Rawitsch, the street plan of which sets a fine example of regularity. In the territory of the Province of Posen-West Prussia the towns of Schlichtingsheim and Unruhstadt were founded a. 1650 by Silesian Protestant refugees, the former being named after Joh. Georg von Schlichting, the latter after the landlord Christoph von Unruh, of Karge Castle. In the northern Grenzmark the towns of Schönlanke and Jastrow were founded, both existing already as villages, of which

Schönlanke was known for its annual fairs. In 1731 it was granted the so-called Magdeburg municipal privileges. Jastrow is already mentioned in documents of the 14th century, but it was not until 1602 that it was granted municipal privileges by Peter Potulicki, Starost of Usch-Schneidemühl, and by King Sigismund III of Poland. Burgo-master Andreas Barry, elected in 1604, belonged to those Scotch Protestants who, like the Dutch, in troublesome times, had left their native country to settle mainly in Prussian and Polish towns. To some of the names of 150 men, who were the first to swear allegiance, there stands added the remark "A Scotsman". In later years, too, a good many Jastrow citizens were called Scotsmen, and there were also Scotch colonies in Deutsch Krone and other towns. They all knew their business, some of them growing to be so wealthy as to even become money-lenders to the nobility. The busy town of Jastrow, in particular, flourished soon due to its extensive trade, and must have appealed to the marked industrious sense of the Scotch because there were many of them in the town. During the time of religious persecutions in Poland, the Scotch called upon England for help, as did, for instance, Mr. Johnston, in Lissa, the great savant; and they received financial assistance.

It deserves mentioning, however, that the granting of municipal privileges to the village of Radolin on the Netze River, in 1759 by King August III upon the initiative of Count Radolinski, of Behle, proved a failure; and 100 years later the town was made a village again. Many landlords, among them Count Radolinski, were very anxious to found new towns in the attempt of gaining new sources of

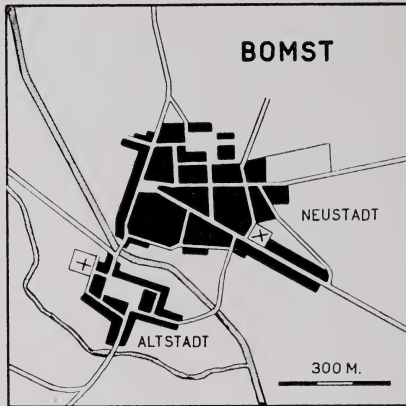
revenue, and they did so without due regard for economic necessities, i. e. sufficient market possibilities.

Just as numerous as the entirely new towns founded during the second colonization period were the new towns built adjacent to old ones. Directly in front, or to one side, of a town already existent, the immigrants built a new one, which mostly grew



to be bigger and more important than the old one. In the course of time some of them merged into one entity, while others have remained separate from each other. The most conspicuous case is that of the town of Tirschtiegel where, as late as 1855, the Obra River separated two totally different towns from each other, each one having its own administration. Alt-Tirschtiegel is situated to the east, Tirschtiegel-Neustadt to the west, of the Obra River; the inhabitants of Alt-Tirschtiegel being

mostly Catholics, those of Tirschtiegel-Neustadt mostly Protestants, due to its having been founded by such. Up to the union of the two towns there was even considerably friction between them. Also the town plan of Bomst depicts clearly the demarcation between the old and the new towns; similar conditions, though not so pronounced, prevail with reference to Fraustadt, as is shown in the ground



plans contained in the context. In the northern Grenzmark, too, the creation of a new town section adjacent to an old one is clearly recognizable in more than one case.

To the Grenzmark territory, and to the western part of Posen, joining it, German immigration, and a freshening up of the blood caused by the second period of colonization, was of tremendous importance. Here, in spite of all efforts at Polonization attempted since the first period of immigration, the

German element had stood its ground; now, however, due to the great influx of German burghers and peasants, it became so decisive and numerically predominant that the Polish population was relegated to a position of subordinate importance, even disappearing entirely, except a few localities in the Counties of Flatow and Bomst. Elsewhere, as for instance in the villages belonging to the Blesen Monastery, the abbots succeeded during the Counter-



Reformation in winning their subjects back to Catholicism, as did also Count Wedell, owner of the baronial estate of Tütz, and the Jesuits at other places; but it proved impossible to shake these people in their innermost loyalty to German customs and usages, even though they were requested to learn the Polish language, as was the case in the villages belonging to the monasteries.

The fact that the towns and rural districts in the western border territory were overwhelmingly German is proved by the registers listing the citizens,

and the minute books of the municipal courts of aldermen, containing almost exclusively German names, as well as by the minute books of the German village courts of aldermen, and by names contained in other documents, by entries made into the "Grod"-books, church registers, not to forget the inscriptions on the old tomb stones in the cemeteries.

When Frederick the Great assumed sovereignty over West Prussia and the Netze District, and when the Province of Posen, by the Second Division of Poland, fell to Prussia, the numerical proportion of Germans and Poles within the territory of the present Province of the Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia, and in a broad strip of territory joining it, was by far more favourable to the Germans than at the beginning of the Great War, or at the time of the ratification of the Peace Treaty of Versailles in 1920; nor is it a fact when the Covering Note to that peace treaty (Part II, Section 2) states: "All territory inhabited by German majorities, save for a few isolated towns and for colonies established on land recently forcibly expropriated and situated in the midst of indubitably Polish territory, has been left to Germany." When these territories fell to Prussia, the regions thus designated as having been "recently forcibly expropriated" had been inhabited for hundreds of years already by a permanent population deeply devoted to the soil. Whatever has been done since by the Germans in regard to colonization has not changed their numerical strength for the better, but made it worse, because the Polish reaction was more successful than the Prussian colonization policy, especially since the middle of the 19th century.

Before dealing with these Prussian measures, two Slav villages in the southern Grenzmark, Gross-Dammer and Chwalim, in the Counties of Meseritz and Bomst respectively, deserve mention. The inhabitants of the village of Gross-Dammer are often believed to derive their origin from the vicinity of Bamberg in Upper Franconia. It is proved that in the years after the Nordic War (1709-10), when



*Young girls from Gross-Dammer at a procession,
wearing old costumes believed to be Bambergian*

Photogr.: H. Retzlaff

the plague worked havoc in Europe, the totally depopulated "Kämmerei" villages in the neighbourhood of Posen were newly settled by so-called Bambergers, who were Catholics, and introduced their South German dresses and costumes of a type still worn by their descendants. The women are called "Bamberkas". For 150 years they have been faithful to their German characteristics and customs, but since the middle of the last century, and under the influence of Polish teachers and priests, fully Polonized. The same was held to be the case with the inhabitants of Gross-Dammer. Of late, however, the question of the origin of the inhabitants of Gross-Dammer is made subject to thorough research, and many circumstances justify the assumption that they hail from Lower Franconia.

Up to a few years ago, the original inhabitants of Chwalim, near Unruhstadt, were believed to have been Wends. Research work on the part of the Berlin Slavist, Professor Vasmer, has proved, however, that the Slav dialect still spoken in Chwalim by people 70 or 80 years old is Upper Silesian. Presumably, they are Upper Silesian Poles who came here together with the Silesian Protestants of the neighbouring Unruhstadt; and like the inhabitants of Unruhstadt they are Protestants and thoroughly German in mind and soul.

The Catholic inhabitants of the so-called "Koschneiderei", near Konitz, the spurs of which project into the Grenzmark, have also remained true to their German convictions and qualities. These well-to-do German peasants, hailing from Westphalia, and for hundreds of years settled in the territory, speak even today a dialect of their own. They occupy 19 villages south-east of Konitz.

The Colonization Work of Frederick the Great

In 1772, and due to the First Division of Poland, the district of what is today the northern Grenzmark fell to Prussia; and in 1793, by the Second Division of Poland, the district now the southern Grenzmark, became also a part of the State of Prussia. But the country was in an abominable condition, the result of the lawless, troublesome times of the last 50 years prior to the Division of Poland. The Germans in particular had been suffering from the treatment accorded to them by the Poles. During their long war against the Swedes, the Poles had come to believe that the Germans, because of their being convinced Protestants, sided with the Swedes. In Poland the two conceptions "Protestant" and "German" were gradually considered as being one and the same; and acts of violence, and pillage committed by the confederates and some members of the nobility were, therefore, particularly directed against the Germans. Poland now showed extreme intolerance to all dissidents, i. e. Non-Catholics. On the strength of a resolution passed by the Polish Parliament (Polish: Sejm), a large number of Protestant church edifices were torn down, so, for instance, the church in Flatow (1721). The Germans, however, did not give in. General Field-Marshal von der Goltz, who owned extensive landholdings in the County of Deutsch Krone, went even so far as to arm his peasants in order to prevent the wrecking of the church building in Neugoltz. But only a man of his standing could afford to offer resistance of that sort. The Germans had to suffer great injustice, and the whole country was disorganized and impoverished to such a degree that Fre-



*Frederick the Great and von Brenckenhoff
visiting new settlers in the Netze District
(After a painting by Hans Kolschein, in the Theatre
of Schneidemühl)*

derick the Great made the well-known remark that he had fallen heir to a piece of "anarchy". The reports submitted to Frederick the Great by von Domhardt, President of the West Prussian War- and Crownland Chamber, and by Secret Financial Councillor von Brenckenhoff, furnish an illucidating picture of the conditions of the country, and concerning its inhabitants, at that time. The towns were half in ruins, and only thinly populated, and in the country, too, many farms lay desolate.

Paternal solicitude on the part of Frederick the Great and his successors, Prussian discipline, conception of duty, and thoroughness, now contributed their shares in putting the country again on its feet. Melioration work on a large scale was started, based on plans prepared by von Brenckenhoff. The regulation of the Netze River, the lowering of the water levels of numerous lakes, and the cultivation of marshy and boggy regions, were productive of extensive new land for settlement purposes. In order to re-populate the country, the Great King called in peasants from the most various parts of Germany, for instance, from Suabia, the Palatinate, Hessa, Saxony, Mecklenburg. The slogan was: "Peuplieren", i. e. "Create a new population". Irrespective of nationality, Frederick the Great justly considered every working man part of the real wealth of the State, although he had only use for diligent and efficient people. The Poles he considered as being bad hosts, and he expressed himself so quite openly, and sometimes in a most drastic manner. For that reason he seldom settled Poles only. The Crownlands, too, were only leased to Germans, although the king, like all his contemporaries, showed as yet no appreciation of questions of nationality. Germa-

nization by mere force could not be thought of. Frederick II proceeded, guided by the deep insight and reliable perception characteristic of the genial statesman he was. At first he tried to educate the Poles to become suitable agriculturists by settling them together with efficient German peasants in Polish villages. Later, he achieved that purpose more satisfactorily by colonizing villages exclusively with German peasants. He issued the following order: "In the case of settling foreign families, this must not be done by isolating them amidst local families, but by the founding of entire villages and colonies in their midst." The records prove that during the reign of Frederick the Great 2197 peasants were settled in West Prussia, and 1047 in the Netze District. Of these, however, only a negligibly small number concern the Grenzmark because most of its arable soil had already been taken up, and the southern part of the province did as yet not belong to Prussia.

The paternal solicitude of the king was primarily devoted to those towns which, at the beginning of the Prussian administration, were found to be greatly depopulated, or deteriorated, due to the former anarchic conditions in Poland, and struggles between political parties. For the "Establishment of Towns", the king made an annual appropriation of 100 000 Thalers, in addition to which subsidies of a special kind were granted. Deutsch Krone, for instance, received 6000 Thalers annually, Schönlanke 5000 Thalers. Particular care was taken to have trades people and artisans, whom the king had induced to immigrate from the west, settle in the towns. Thus, new lines of business were developed in the towns; and in the course of a few decades these towns bloomed forth

again, the number of their inhabitants rising rapidly and at a higher rate than in the open country. In the territory of the present Grenzmark the increase in the German population at that time was by no means as big as is mostly believed. It deserves mention that the population, qualitatively speaking, showed a remarkable development because, thanks to the solicitude of the king, the cultural standard rose considerably. Due to the Polish anarchy numerous and important assets had been destroyed, and the population reduced to misery; the autocratic Prussian Government, however, conscious of its responsibility, created new assets, added others to them, thus establishing new welfare, and furnishing an impetus to a renewed increase of population.

Of particular interest is Frederick's attitude towards the Jews because it proves that, here too, the king felt intuitively what was necessary and appropriate to do. The number of Jews in the country was disproportionately large, representing in some of the Grenzmark towns, as for instance in Flatow, Krojanke, and Märkisch Friedland, one third, or even one half, of the total population. Due to the Jews' dread of manual work, and ineradicable leaning towards usury, particularly when they appeared in masses, like in the Netze District, the king recognized them as being injurious to all economic activities. For a time he considered the plan of expelling them from that district and West Prussia, and it was not until von Brenckenhoff and other leading State officials had told the king that such a measure would result in serious damaging consequences due to the fact that all trade and business was in the hands of the Jews, that the king changed his attitude, and modified his decree. Only certain

Jews, enjoying general protection, and in a position to prove that they owned not less than 1000 Thalers each, and the Jews under extraordinary protection, and possessing a few hundreds of Thalers each, were allowed to stay in the country. All other Jews, especially the beggars and pedlars, representing the lowest cultural standard of the State's population, and quite often given to thievery and receiving stolen goods, an example of which was the Jewish thieving centre in Betsche, were forced to leave the country. Of 11000 Jews counted in the Netze District after it had been taken possession of by Prussia, 7000 were gradually forced to emigrate, of which Berlin received its full share of Jews chiefly coming from Märkisch-Friedland.

Bismarck's Colonization Policy

After the death of Frederick the Great his colonization policy was continued, but inadequately. In the 19th century, the Prussian Government did not seem at all able to grasp the importance of colonization until Reich Chancellor Bismarck occupied himself again with this question. In the decades following the Congress of Vienna, and on the occasion of the so-called "Peasant Regulation", the stationing of German settlers in the thinly populated German East, and the founding of numerous German villages, would have offered no special difficulties. Large numbers of German peasants were available, mainly consisting of emigrants returning from Congress Poland, but also of South and West Germans, such as Wurttembergers, Badenese, Rhinelanders, and people from the Eichsfeld. They asked

for land which it would have been easy to give them by subdividing the outer areas of domains, by the purchase of Polish estates which could be bought cheap, and in form of land available due to regulation. But nothing worth mentioning was ever done. When under the administration of Flottwell, the efficient Lord-Lieutenant of the Province of Posen, mismanaged Polish estates were purchased, and paid for out of the "Funds for the Operation of Estates", the colonization problem was again lost sight of. True enough, the importance of this problem has been properly recognized by a few, as, for instance, by the gifted Minister of Finance von Motz, but its realization miscarried almost invariably due to narrow-minded bureaucratic considerations and objections. It seemed as though the achievements derived from immigration during the Middle Ages, and the colonization policy of Frederick the Great, had fallen into oblivion. And to make matters worse, great damage was done to German national interests inasmuch as the Poles enjoyed preferential treatment compared with that accorded to Germans. This happened especially in the period between 1820 and 1850 in the County of Flatow, a Grenzmark district the German character of which appeared particularly menaced. Today, the District of Flatow would show an altogether different aspect from a national point of view if the experiences made in the past had been properly and steadily heeded. Poles, too, were settled in several of the new villages founded in connection with the "Peasant Regulation Work", and even within the range of the large domains near Flatow, belonging to the House of Hohenzollern (the Flatow-Krojanke Estate of Prince Frederick Leopold). At that time

the peasants, in order to redeem the services to be rendered, and the taxes to be paid, to their landlords, had to relinquish up to one third of their respective acreages. The land thus becoming available was then settled with new peasants. However, the individual holdings were mostly too small, and, in addition, the soil in the eastern part of the Flatow District was so poor that German peasants often refused it; the more easily satisfied Poles, however, grabbed it. The Polish element was added to by the workers employed by the Forest Administration; and as numerous peasants left their reduced size farms, there was room for Polish immigrants, so that the number of Poles showed a steady increase thanks to the tolerant and benevolent attitude of the Prussian Government. In 1836 the County Administrator of Flatow, evidently complying with instructions from his superiors, published in the County Gazette a request for reports of the names of such refugees from Congress Poland who had passed the Russian border after the unsuccessful November Revolution in 1830. Those people were then naturalized and settled as labourers, cottagers, artisans, and the like. By subdivision of the estates of Gross- and Klein-Butzig, among others belonging to Count von Grabowski, who by his own fault had become bankrupt, and by awarding the newly created places to Poles, villages came into existence which today are Polish bulwarks.

The Gipsies too, like the Jews, manifested their presence in fairly large numbers in the County of Flatow. Frederick the Great had already tried to settle them in Buschdorf, Lugetal, and elsewhere, but, owing to their roving spirit, they left these

places, selling them to the Poles, thereby contributing to an increase of the Polish element in the "Stormy Corner" of the Grenzmark.

Such was the picture presented by "Expropriation" in the first half of the 19th century.

The pressing onward of the German people towards the east, which in the past had filled the depopulated eastern regions, had not only come to a standstill but had even changed into a westward movement. The reasons are to be found in the efforts of the German population to gain their livelihoods in the industrial districts of the west, or in the big cities. Opposed to this was a net birth increase of the Polish population, their solid organization with a definite purpose, and a considerable immigration of alien eastern elements from the Russian and Austrian parts of Poland. The unwise zigzag course pursued by the Prussian Government, trying it one time with leniency and reconciliation, the other time with sternness and unyieldingness, proved disastrous. Briefly speaking, the national Polish element grew steadily stronger in the same proportion in which the German element decreased numerically. According to statistics established by the Polish historian and economist Buzek — a witness for the other side —, in the ten years from 1871 to 1880 the German population of the four Government Districts of Posen, Bromberg, Oppeln and Köslin has increased by 54,813, the Polish population by 251,358, almost five times as much as the former. In view of the Polish immigration, the German population found itself on the defensive. While the Poles not belonging to the nobility represented originally the bigger part of the lower social classes, they being agricul-

tural labourers, handy men, domestic and business servants, they now gradually began to be peasants, artisans, and merchants, thus becoming members of the middle classes, and also devoting themselves in increasing numbers to the academic vocations thanks to the help of the Marcinkowski Association. Clever propaganda by the Polish leaders, most of them being priests, conscientiously pursuing a definite aim, did the best it could.

German preventive measures became imperative, and Reich Chancellor Prince Bismarck, who had clearly recognized the problem from the beginning, availed himself of the same means at one time applied by the Ascanian Margraves, the Teutonic Order of Knights and Frederick the Great. He brought German peasants into the country, and, for that purpose, founded in 1886 the "German Colonization Commission".

In post-war times this commission has met with severe criticism, although unjustly so, for the idea itself was correct, success manifesting itself in the last few years prior to the war inasmuch as the German population, at the expense of the Polish one, offset the heavy losses suffered during the last 50 years. Unfortunately, the activity of the Colonization Commission was greatly encumbered by rising real estate prices and Polish reaction, finally resulting in the fact that Polish owned real estate was no longer available for the establishing of German settlers. That was the reason for the promulgation of the disastrous Expropriation Law which, although applied but in four cases involving a total of 4100 acres, created in the opinion of the world a bad impression of Germany.

The Colonization Commission worked also in the

Grenzmark. A number of estates, almost exclusively purchased from German owners, were subdivided and settled with German peasants, as, for instance, in Hinzendorf, Kandlau, Buchwald, Ilgen, in the County of Fraustadt; in Friedendorf, Lupitze, Grossdorf, Berg-Vorwerk, Hammer-Mühle, in the County of Bomst; in Nipter and Zielomischel, in the County of Meseritz; in Behle, Karlshorst and Lemnitz, in Netze County; in Augustendorf, Wittenburg, Treuenheide and Posenberg, in the County of Flatow; and in Gross Jenznick, in the County of Schlochau. Generally speaking, the activity of the Colonization Commission was very limited because this region was thoroughly German except in a few places. In the few places where the Poles invaded the province, the soil was, however, either too poor for cultivation, or in possession of the House of Hohenzollern. The work of the Colonization Commission was more concentrated upon the strongly Polish inner regions of the former Provinces of Posen and West Prussia. Similarly, in the territory of the Grenzmark, the Colonization Commission and the General Commission have created approximately 2000, for the most part small, leaseholds. In this connection it must be stated that in Caprivi's time the General Commission in Bromberg and Breslau thwarted the work of the Colonization Commission in favour of Polish subdivisions and colonization, but that both commissions never promoted in the least the idea of reconciling both nationalities with each other.

It is a fact that in the same proportion in which the Colonization Commission advanced with its settlement work into the Polish parts of Posen and West Prussia, the Poles pushed forward into regions for

hundreds of years already settled exclusively with Germans, including what is today the Grenzmark. This Polish immigration did not only bring Polish peasants into villages which had as yet never seen a single Pole but also permeated in an ever increasing ratio the population of towns and cities which up to a. 1850 had been purely German. A comparison of the old civic records with the statistics on the component parts of the population at the beginning of the Great War, or a perusal of Bögg's old Statistics of 1869 on German Population and Language, shows clearly the manner in which purely German regions were gradually lost to, or permeated by, Poles, a fact for which the village of Lancken, in the County of Flatow, furnishes an example. Prior to 1900 the population of this village was purely German, but then, in 1902, one of the two estates in the neighbourhood of the village was acquired by the Polnische Parcellierungs Bank in Posen, and subdivided in behalf of Polish settlers. The Community of Königsdorf, in the County of Flatow, founded in 1823 in connection with the regulation of the holdings of the landlords and peasants, and named in honour of King Frederick William III, and originally almost exclusively settled with German Protestant colonists, has become half Polish, due to Polish immigration. Many other villages have shared a similar fate.

Made to the German pattern, but standing under the influence of the clergy of the Catholic Church, and much more thoroughly developed, the Polish organization was admirable; a fact unreservedly admitted by the Germans even though this organization inflicted great injury on them; but it must be once more emphasized that, shortly before the be-

ginning of the Great War, the results of the measures applied by Bismarck began to manifest themselves inasmuch as a slight increase of the German population, compared with the Polish one, became evident. All this, however, and everything good derived therefrom, was destroyed by the Treaty of Versailles and the events following thereafter.

Present Tasks

Today Bismarck's Colonization Scheme is being applied again and carried through on a large scale. The word: "Colonize!" has become a motto, and justly so. But, and in connection with the settling of peasants, the intention prevails more than ever before to replace the estates and their cottagers by independent peasants, i. e. free, proud, and industrious people as compared with unfree, suppressed, and altogether too much dependent agricultural labourers, employed on such estates. Present colonization work in the Grenzmark, as well as in the Eastern March generally, has set itself the following four tasks: (1) populating the empty spaces, (2) strengthening of German nationalism, customs and usages, (3) settling of free peasants in the place of dependent agricultural workers (cottagers), and, consequently, (4) raising the economic and cultural life to a higher standard.

In the Grenzmark, attainment of the first object is difficult, because the poor soil, and prevailing unfavourable climatic conditions, do not permit of a considerable increase of agriculturally exploited areas, and, thus, of the rural population. Nature has drawn limits which man cannot cross without serious in-

jury to himself. Similar to former times when settlements on unproductive soil had to be abandoned, many of the settlers of our time, and even the whole population of a village, departed by night, and left the country. The subdividing of lordly estates tends only very little, or not at all, to increase the number of people living in this area. The operation of an agricultural estate requires just about the same number of men and workers as it requires peasants to be settled on the ground comprising such estates. Undoubtedly, however, the second and third objects will be attained. The carefully selected peasant families which have been settled represent a strong backing of German national interests, customs, traditions, etc. Numerically speaking, that is already a fact because many of the agricultural labourers engaged on the landed estates are Polish to this day. The innermost attitude of a free peasant, inseparably bound to his soil, devoted to his home country, people, and State, is, however, quite different from that of a dependent and homeless worker. There can be no doubt about the fact that the founding of new peasant villages has enhanced cultural life and intellectual attitude; and the expectation that economic life will experience a new impetus, at least locally, appears justified.

All these circumstances make it clear why colonization work in the border territory, with its menaced German national interests, is being carried through more extensively, compared with other parts of the German Reich. Not less than nine colonization enterprises have been active in the Grenzmark. At the beginning of their activities, some very unpleasant occurrences happened, due to the period of monetary



Small settlement in Pottlitz, Flatow County

Photogr.: H. Götzing

inflation and the introduction of a stabilized currency as well as to all the unsound conditions prevailing in post-war times. Insufficient knowledge of prevailing natural conditions, too, was a reason for mistakes, which taught man, however, how to avoid them. Following the National-Socialist Revolution of 1933, colonization work has received a new impetus. Present regulations provide that the Reich Food Estate, the State Peasants Association, and the Reich Department for the Selection of German Peasant Settlers, in Berlin, select the respective settlers. Subdividing work, and settlement, is carried through by only a few public colonization companies, and under State control.

In the years 1919-1935 new peasant settlements, numbering 1,700, and comprising a total of 72,775 acres, have been created, housing, and furnishing a livelihood to, 8,231 German men, women, and children. Additional arable land is available, the biggest part of which has been secured by the subdividing of large estates and State domains, only about 2,910 acres originating from estates comprising less than 250 acres each. At the end of 1935, 241 of the new places had an area of less than 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres, only 467 a size in excess of 50 acres, most of the places, i. e. 992, having an area of from 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 50 acres each. Today one is wisely refraining from making the farms too small.

In addition to the settling of peasants in the open agricultural districts, carried through with the cooperation of the State Agricultural Authorities, the establishment of small urban settlements, on the outskirts of towns and cities, is of no small importance. One is justified in assuming that this form of settlement work in other provinces has been handled just as energetically as in the Grenzmark, it requires, therefore, no further illucidation in this treatise.

In order to point out clearly the tasks presenting themselves for the immediate future, some figures and facts deserve mention:

The Province of Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia occupies an area of 1,906,342 acres, or a. 2,974 square miles. According to the last census, taken on June 16th, 1933, there lived in this area 337,578 people of whom approximately two thirds (210,034) were Protestants, and about one third (123,586) Catholics.

Of 327,252 persons, the mother language was

German, of 6,375 Polish, and of 3,951 both German and Polish, from which follows that 96.94 % of the population spoke the German, 1.89 % the Polish, and 1.17 % the German and Polish languages. The mother language does, however, not imply the same as does nationality, or to be more precise, national conviction, and loyalty to a certain race of people, its traditions, customs and usages. It is quite possible that someone, without being a Pole, uses the Polish or some other Slav idiom as his domestic or mother language, or vice versa. The former elections to the German Reichstag, and to the various Diets, as well as the municipal elections, furnished a far better possibility of gauging the political convictions and the national loyalty of a person; however, this possibility is no longer available, and it is difficult to state how many Poles are actually living in the Grenzmark. At the last elections to the Prussian Diet, on March 5th, 1933, the Polish votes cast were 4,066, or 2.07 %, out of a total of 196,152. In 1920, at the elections to the German Reichstag, out of a total of 149,755 constituents 9,519, or 6.42 %, voted the Polish ticket. Thereafter, the Polish votes decreased more and more, amounting in 1924 and 1928 to only 3 % and 2.8 % respectively, today hardly amounting to 2%. That means that since the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles there has been a considerable decrease in the number of Poles in the Grenzmark, which can be largely attributed to the emigration of Poles during the first few years following the re-establishment of Poland as a State, partly, however, to a change of convictions, and a voluntary assimilation of Poles with German nationals. The County of Flatow shows with a. 14.5 % the biggest proportion of Po-

les, followed closely by the County of Bomst with 13.5 %, the County of Fraustadt having the lowest proportion, during the last elections only one Polish vote having been cast, while in the County of Schlochau a total of 7, and in the Counties of Deutsch Krone, Schwerin, and in Netze County, 9 votes each were counted. In these counties the Poles, therefore, exercise no influence at all. Of the population of the County of Meseritz 3 % are Poles, residing almost exclusively in the Polish village of Gross-Dammer.

Following the Ministerial Decree of December 21st, 1928, the Poles have established so-called minority schools of which there is a total of 26, namely 21, 4, and 1 in the Counties of Flatow, Bomst, and Meseritz respectively. They are visited by a total of 1,080 children, under a staff of 41 Polish teachers. All these schools are private institutions, most of them (19) receiving subsidies from the Prussian State, provided, each school is visited by not less than 40 children. Due to lack of a sufficient number of school children, three of the originally established schools had to be discontinued. There are, furthermore, ten nurseries for children. In a political-cultural respect, and also in reference to economic activities, the Poles in the Grenzmark, as in Germany generally, are excellently organized, being united in "The Polish League in Germany", its President residing in Buschdorf-Zakrzewo, in Flatow County; they are, furthermore, organized in "The Polish-Catholic School Association" and in numerous associations devoted to sports, gymnastics, and in such of a professional character. They have their own banks and cooperative organizations, all of them functioning excellently. The Poles have

also made efforts at establishing a classical high school at Flatow, a plan which did not materialize. At present, 35 boys from all over the Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia visit the Polish classical high school at Beuthen, Upper Silesia.

The Province of Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia is very thinly populated owing to reasons set forth in the first chapter of this treatise. The average population per square mile numbers 113.44 which is not even one third of the average density of population of the German Reich, which equals 363 inhabitants per square mile. The Grenzmark is thus the most thinly populated region of the German Reich. The worst off is the County of Deutsch Krone, with 81.6 inhabitants per square mile, due to the extensive forests in the north-eastern part of the county. The province's increase in population is very small too. During the period between the two censuses of 1925 and 1933 respectively, the population increased by 1.5 % as compared with 4.5 % in the German Reich in general. Only four Prussian Administrative Districts (Gumbinnen, Köslin, Frankfurt-on-Oder, Magdeburg) showed a smaller increase in population. At that, the excess of births over deaths, equalling 11.1 per one Thousand in 1935, has also in other years been larger than in most Prussian provinces and German states. This small increase in population is caused by the migration of country people to the towns and cities, and to the west; it is a phenomenon that bodes no good, and requires closest attention. It is to be hoped that colonization and settlement work in the agricultural and urban districts, and a revival of trade and commerce, will contribute their shares to improving the present conditions.



*German peasant woman at the well,
wearing home-spun garments
Photogr.: H. Götzing*

It is difficult to render a conclusive opinion on the racial aspect of the population because it is seldom that a territory has a population composed of so many different elements as has the Grenzmark. Nordic and Phalian races have contributed their shares as have the Eastern and East Baltic races. Settlers came from all parts of Germany, mixing with Slavs. Predominant is the Nordic race, particularly so in the northern part of the Grenzmark, whose population is mainly derived from families which immigrated from Lower Saxony. But even the blood of the ancient Germani, who occupied the country thousands of years ago, can still be traced because during the great migration of people remnants of these tribes remained in the country, and Nordic Vikings invaded it. A close study of the rural population reveals the predominance of the long-skulled, blond, tall type.

As far as language is concerned, North German idioms are spoken north of the Netze River, while in the County of Deutsch Krone, and in Netze County, the South Pomeranian Low German is spoken, introduced into the region by the second wave of colonization, and spreading from a northwesterly direction. It is also called the "Schulzendorf" idiom because it is spoken in the "Schulzen" villages of Arnswalde and Dramburg, and as far as Obornik and Rogasen. In the Counties of Flatow and Schlochau, the Pomerellian idiom is spoken which is almost the same as the dialect (called "Itsch" dialect) spoken in the Pomeranian Counties of Neustettin, Rummelsburg, Bublitz, Belgard, and Schlawe. In the eastern part of Schlochau County the dialect spoken in the Koschneiderei is heard. Central German dialects are spoken south of the Netze

River, dialects which in the central part of the Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia are not very much different from the High German language. In the Counties of Bomst and Fraustadt the dialect is pure Silesian, conforming to the historical development of colonization in these counties.

If there should still be any doubt about the German character of the Grenzmark, the fact that everywhere in its territory, and for hundreds of years, German idioms have been spoken in addition to High German should render final and conclusive proof of the ancient and permanent German character of its population. Nor is there any lack of idiomatic poetry; and thus the chain of evidence closes, proving that the Germans, by peaceful and untiring labour and efforts, have regained possession of the old Germanic territory of the Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia lost to the Slavs during the great migration of people.



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